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INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE 0152
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2036
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 002718

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/01/2028
TAGS: [UNSC](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#) [XA](#) [ZU](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR URGES PRC SUPPORT FOR ZIMBABWE
RESOLUTION

REF: STATE 74375

Classified By: Acting Minister Counselor Ben Moeling. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting with Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Jieyi the Ambassador pushed strongly for China to support bringing a resolution on Zimbabwe to a vote in the UN Security Council and to vote for that resolution. AFM Liu said China opposes the draft resolution and claimed that the real obstacle to a negotiated solution in Zimbabwe is Morgan Tsvangirai, whose position has changed from conciliatory to hard line because he perceives Mugabe to be under pressure from the International Community. Liu stressed China's position that the situation in Zimbabwe does not warrant reference to Chapter VII, and said "China sincerely hopes our votes are not divided on this issue." He said China has information that Mugabe would accept a power sharing agreement with Tsvangirai, possibly with Mugabe as president and Tsvangirai in an "executive position" such as Premier.
END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) In the absence of Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui, the Ambassador met with Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Jieyi July 11 at the Foreign Ministry, accompanied by Acting POL MinCouns. AFM Liu was accompanied by a full lineup of staff from the North American and Oceanian Affairs Department, including Director General Zheng Zeguang, Deputy Director General Deng Hongbo, USA Division Director An Gang and USA Division Deputy Director Jing Quan.

¶3. (C) Drawing on reftel points, the Ambassador stressed the seriousness of the situation in Zimbabwe and noted that it had been a topic of discussion between President Bush and President Hu at their meeting at the G-8 Summit in Japan. He noted that Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Morgan Tsvangirai had denied the reports that negotiations are taking place in South Africa between the MDC and the Government of Zimbabwe.

¶4. (C) The situation in Zimbabwe remains dire, the Ambassador continued. The Security Council must act to tell the Mugabe regime to end the violence and begin serious negotiations with the opposition leading to a solution that respects the will of the Zimbabwean people. The Ambassador stated that the draft resolution will empower regional and international mediators by strengthening the incentives for Mugabe to negotiate seriously. He urged AFM Liu to instruct China's Permanent Representative to support bringing the draft resolution to an immediate vote and to vote "yes."

¶5. (C) AFM Liu said that China is also concerned about the situation in Zimbabwe and has been discussing the issue of the draft UNSC resolution with the other members of the Security Council in recent days. Liu said that China is squarely behind an African solution to the Zimbabwe problem,

to be reached through consultation and negotiation. Liu said the African Union has adopted a resolution calling for dialogue and calling on the International Community not to undertake any acts that would harm the atmosphere for negotiations. The South African Development Community (SADC) is actively involved in mediation, as is South African President Thabo Mbeki.

¶16. (C) The problem is not Mugabe, Liu asserted, but instead is actually Tsvangirai. Tsvangirai has changed his position from conciliatory to "hard line." Liu blamed this change of position on the draft UNSCR and the International Community's statements, which have "put a lot of pressure on Mugabe" and given Tsvangirai an incentive to "wait things out" rather than engage in substantive negotiations. According to information from South Africa, Liu said, three groups are actually negotiating: Tsvangirai's group, another faction from MDC and ZANU-PR. If the conditions are right, and if the International Community and the UN Security Council work in the same direction and move things forward, there is the possibility of reaching an agreement on power sharing and a government of national unity, Liu declared. This is the best solution for Zimbabwe's people, and offers the greatest chance of "returning Zimbabwe to normalcy."

¶17. (C) The International Community must give President Mbeki and the African countries the time they need to work out a solution that will allow a united government and power sharing in Zimbabwe, Liu continued. He strongly urged the United States, as well as the UK, not to press to submit the draft resolution for a vote. "We have serious problems with the content," he said, arguing that the situation in Zimbabwe

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does not constitute a threat to international peace and security according to the UN Charter and therefore there is no basis for a reference to Chapter VII.

¶18. (C) The draft resolution "is not a basis for moving to a negotiated solution and will complicate the situation and move us farther away from a power-sharing solution," Liu said. The United States and China share the same goal for Zimbabwe: peace and stability. We differ only on the means for achieving that goal. China believes that not submitting the resolution will do much to encourage a solution in Zimbabwe.

¶19. (C) South Africa, Russia and China all have very strong views on this resolution. In light of the "extraordinary cooperation on a range of issues" between the United States and China, Liu said, "China sincerely hopes our votes are not divided on this issue." He noted that a vote could move Zimbabwe towards "complication and chaos," observing that Mugabe "has armed forces."

¶110. (C) The Ambassador asked Liu if China truly believes that Mugabe is willing to countenance a power sharing arrangement. AFM Liu said that China has "an authoritative, reliable source" who states that Mugabe is willing to consider sharing power, perhaps with himself as president and Tsvangirai in an "executive position" such as premier. "Mugabe is even considering retirement, maybe in one or two years," Liu said. He noted that the "authoritative, reliable source" was at the G-8 summit in Japan. (Note: Liu did not say so explicitly, but was strongly hinting that his source was President Mbeki.)

¶111. (C) The parties involved can come to a solution, Liu said, if the UNSC resolution does not provide Tsvangirai another reason not to consider negotiation. "Mugabe is trying to reach a solution, and has the backing of many African countries. We should give him a chance," Liu urged. The Ambassador noted that Zimbabwe is in terrible shape as a result of Mugabe.

¶112. (C) Liu stated that Zimbabwe must "find a new state

apparatus" that will prevent the country from "falling into chaos." We must work to increase the possibility that our common objective will be successful, which means "relaxing a bit" in the UN Security Council, Liu concluded.

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